

# **SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

## **Sioux Falls School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006**

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

**Promising Practice** The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

**Meets Requirements** The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

**Needs Assistance** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.

**Needs Intervention** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.

**Not applicable** In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

### **Principle 1 – General Supervision**

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. Student progress data
2. Surveys
3. Private school information
4. Local Education Association (LEA) flow through funds request information
5. Information on home school students
6. Comprehensive plan
7. Comprehensive system of personnel development plan
8. Teacher Assistance Team (TAT): referral vs. non referral information
9. Needs assessment information (such as personnel, facilities, etc)
10. Personnel training
11. Budget information
12. Screening Information
13. Referral logs summary

### **Promising Practice**

The steering committee identified the district's 12-month Early Childhood child find as a promising practice.

The integration specialists and continuum of behavior services represent a promising practice.

Staff have access to computerized student and classroom performance related to the standards on assessments. The committee determined the resources available to staff to study individual student and specific classroom performance related to the standards was a promising practice.

### **Maintenance**

The Steering committee concluded the district's comprehensive plan has specific documentation that will be maintained and reported to the state annually on December 1<sup>st</sup> for all child identification activities.

In review of the district's pre-referral and referral procedures, the committee concluded referral meets requirements.

Upon review of private school meeting documents, the district meets the requirements for children voluntarily enrolled in private schools by their parents.

The committee determined through the review of IEP participation, program options, and building level supports, the district meets requirements for students placed by the school district in private schools.

The steering committee noted the district needs to verify data and sources used in determining graduation and drop-out rates.

Upon review of data and the practices of completing a functional behavior assessment at five days, the steering committee concluded this practice meets requirements. The committee concluded the district meets the requirements for suspension and even exceeds what is expected with the district's out-of-school suspension alternative program with special education support.

The steering committee determined 100% of the district's special education staff is certified. The district has made efforts to support teachers in taking the Praxis, as well as those who have not met the highly qualified status.

The committee found the district has offered training to all groups, but they noted the district should continue to work on strategies to improve the participation of parents at trainings.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's promising practice conclusion regarding the district's year-round Early Childhood child find activities. In interviews, the team learned screenings occur 12 months throughout the year, four and one half days a week, including two evenings each month.

The district does screenings at daycares upon receiving parental consent. In addition, the team noted:

- Developmental milestones are sent home. Communications with parents about developmental milestones have been put in many different modes (colors, languages...);
- If concerns with a child's development arise, the school district personally contacts the parents.
- Vision screenings are provided with machines donated by the Lions Club, and an anonymous optometrist contributes time to read the results.
- Hearing screenings are conducted by local doctors if there are concerns.

The district conducts child find activities through several communication modes, which include television ads, newspaper ads, mass mailings to daycares, mass mailings in bills (i.e. cable bills), booths at conferences, and pamphlets at Sioux Falls libraries, doctor's offices, etc.

The district works closely with Head Start Programs in the area. The district conducts the required screening when a child qualifies for Head Start.

It was learned through interviews that a homeless teacher has been hired by the district to visit shelters, bridges, and other areas where homeless children might be found to help the children attend school. Further, the teacher assists parents with services within the community (e.g., shelters, food pantries, and community health). In addition, district nursing services are provided for the homeless.

Through interviews, the monitoring team validated the committee's promising practice of the district having integration specialists and a continuum of behavior

services. District staff said the specialist's and continuum of behavior services allows students to remain in the district rather than being placed in a facility outside the district.

The team also agreed the computer resources available to staff to study individual student and classroom performance related to the standards is a promising practice in the district. It was learned through interviews that staff have access to up-to-date information regarding individual student progress and specific classroom performance.

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's data for meeting the requirements of General Supervision, with the exception reported below.

### **Out of Compliance: Needs Intervention**

The monitoring team was unable to validate a student on the district's child count is eligible for special education services.

#### **ARSD 24:05:17:03. Annual report of children served.**

In its annual report of children served, the division shall indicate the following:

- (1) The number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services on December 1 of that school year;
- (2) The number of children with disabilities aged 3 to 5, inclusive, who are receiving a free appropriate public education;
- (3) The number of children with disabilities aged 6 to 17, inclusive, and 18 to 21, inclusive; and
- (4) The number of those children with disabilities aged 3 to 21, inclusive, for each year of age, starting with age 3 within each disability category.

For the purpose of this section, a child's age is the child's actual age on the date of the child count, December 1.

The division may not report a child under more than one disability category.

Student 111 is reported on the district's child count as having Traumatic Brain Injury; however, the student's evaluation results, classroom observation, five teacher classroom performance reports, and the IEP information do not justify the educational relevance for the student to receive Special Education services.

Student 155 was reported on the district child count and should not have been as he was not on a current IEP.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. District Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
2. State Data Tables
3. Local Education Association (LEA) flow through funds request information
4. District suspension/expulsion data
5. District Information:
  - Student Assistance Team (SAT) reports
  - District Behavior Intervention Guide
  - Parent surveys
  - Initial referral logs
  - Screening data
  - File review data
  - District discipline plan

### **Promising Practice**

The steering committee determined a promising practice in the district is the behavior team supports and specialized programs for students.

### **Meets Requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district meets the FAPE requirements. Their decision was based on comprehensive data analysis, parent survey results, and review of data pertaining to eligible children with disabilities, and children expelled from school for more than 10 days who are provided services.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's determination that the district's behavior team supports and specialized programs for students is a promising practice. In interviews with administrators and teachers, the team determined the district's behavior team supports and specialized student programs exceed the requirements of FAPE.

Through interviews, the Elementary English as a Second Language Program was determined by the team to be a promising practice. This three-level district funded program assists students with limited English proficiency to participate in educational programs and assimilate into the American culture.

### **Meets Requirements**

The team validated the steering committee's conclusion that the district meets the requirements of FAPE.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. District surveys
2. Comprehensive plan

### **Promising Practice**

Evaluation procedures for determining special education eligibility of students learning English as a second language was identified as a promising practice by the steering committee. In addition, the committee identified the technical assistance guide developed by the district that addresses evaluating students who are learning English as a second language is a promising practice.

### **Meets Requirements**

Based on file reviews and district procedures, the steering committee concluded appropriate written notice is provided and informed consent is obtained before assessments are administered.

The committee determined through file review data, parent surveys, local Student Assistance Team (SAT) data, initial referral logs, the district's Comprehensive Plan, and form reviews, the district meets the requirements for ensuring proper identification of students through evaluation. In addition, the committee concluded reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continued eligibility.

### **Needs Improvement**

Ongoing training in the district using functional assessment information within the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance was identified as needing improvement by the steering committee.

### **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's conclusion that the district's development of the English as Second Language technical assistance guide for evaluating ESL students is a promising practice. ESL evaluation procedures were not validated as a promising practice, because they are requirements.

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team did not validate the steering committee's conclusions for Appropriate Evaluation.

**Out of Compliance: Needs Intervention**

Through interviews and file reviews, the steering committee did not validate the committee's conclusion that the district meets the requirements for ensuring proper identification of students through initial evaluation or reevaluations.

**ARSD 24:05:22:03. Certified child.**

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an Individual Education Program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child's disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3 to 21, inclusive, and to only those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

The monitoring team identified the following students in need of a reevaluation.

Student 6 was found eligible for services in the Mental Retardation category. Upon review of the psychological report, it stated two intellectual ability tests (i.e., WRIT and C-TONI) were given, but the validity was questionable. On the WRIT, the Visual IQ was 35 points higher than the Verbal IQ (i.e., 74 and 39, respectively). There was a 12 point difference between the student's WRIT General IQ, 50, and the C-TONI Nonverbal IQ, 62. The WRIT General IQ was used to determine eligibility. In addition, the report included statements suggesting the student's language skills were a concern. On the MDT, it stated, "Lack of English may somewhat affect ... ability to learn", which implies the student did not have an appropriate evaluation.

Student 53 was found eligible for services as a student having a Specific Learning Disability. In 2003, the student's intellectual ability was assessed using the WRIT (i.e., Verbal IQ, 68; Visual IQ, 79; and General IQ, 69). The student's adaptive behavior and academic achievement scores fell within the Below Average and Well Below Average ranges; thus, the student was determined eligible for services in the Mentally Retarded category. In 2006, the student was again assessed using the WRIT (i.e., Verbal, 70; Visual, 100; General, 82). The student's academic achievement scores fell in the Below Average range. No adaptive behavior evaluation was given during the current reevaluation. The WRIT Visual Intelligence Quotient of 100 was used to determine the student was eligible for services in the area of Specific Learning Disability. The psychological report, teacher classroom performance reports, and observation information suggest this student's communication, social, adaptive behavior, and academic skill needs were not appropriately evaluated.

**ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

(4) No single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility or an appropriate educational program for a child.

The team concluded children are being over identified as having Multiple Disabilities in the areas of Other Health Impaired and Emotionally Disturbed. The team noted the school psychologist consistently gives the BASC, and school nurse gives the ADDES. In addition, student evaluation reports consistently had scores, but the reports did not address specific student behavior, emotional, and/or attention difficulties. Two separate measures of the student's behavior and two separate measures of the student's attention skill deficits were not found in evaluation reports; thus, documentation did not show the validity of the scores or support the multiple disabilities eligibility for ED and OHI.

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

School Districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

(7) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities; In evaluating each child with a disability, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs.

The monitoring team concluded through file reviews systemic concerns in the district pertaining to a child being assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability. An example the monitors' consistently found was behavior or attention evaluations were not given when parents and teacher(s) reported a student's attention and off-task behaviors were impacting learning. In interviews, it was determined individualized evaluations are not completed, because the district only has specific tests available. In addition, the evaluators seldom have the opportunity to consult with the student's teacher(s) before testing, and consultation among the evaluators is not done before, during, or after student testing.

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:06. Reevaluations**

Reevaluations shall be conducted at least every three years if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests an evaluation. Reevaluations must be completed within 25 school days after receipt by the district of signed consent to reevaluate unless other time limits are agreed to by the school administration and the parents. Each school district shall follow the procedures under 24:05:25:04.02 when reevaluating a student for the additional purposes of:

(1) Determining whether the child continues to have a disability

Through file reviews and interviews, the monitoring team determined children receiving related services were dismissed without any record of reevaluation. There was no record the district followed the required procedures before determining the child is no longer a child with disability.

### **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**



Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. District comprehensive plan
2. District Information:
  - Parent Rights brochure (English and Spanish)
  - Parent survey data
  - File Review data
  - District form reviews
  - Special Education Handbook Procedures
  - Record of annual publishing of FERPA notice
  - Historical records of due process hearing requests

### **Promising Practice**

The steering committee concluded a promising practice was the district ensuring written notice was provided for all IEP meetings.

### **Meets Requirements**

Based on review of the parent rights brochure, file review data, and parent surveys, the committee concluded the district meets the written notice requirements with the exception noted in the "Needs Improvement" section.

The district's Comprehensive Plan and historical records show policies and procedures are in place for responding to complaint actions and to requests for due process that ensure compliance.

Confidentiality and access to records requirements are addressed in the district's Comprehensive Plan and Parent Rights Brochure. Parent surveys indicated the district complies with these requirements.

Based on file review data, the committee determined the district meets the requirements to ensure parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication, if necessary, of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought.

The district's Comprehensive Plan and Special Education Handbook have procedures that are implemented to ensure the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be notified.

### **Needs Improvement:**

The committee concluded further training is needed to improve provision of a written notice to parents one year prior to their child's graduation as a proposed change of placement (i.e. graduation or completion of an approved program).

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The steering committee's promising practice conclusion of the district ensuring written notice is provided for all IEP meetings was not validated by the monitoring team, because written notice is required.

A promising practice identified by the monitoring team through interviews was the district utilization of an AT&T Language Line. Calls are conducted during meetings with translators, from anywhere in the world, in order for staff to communicate with parents about the district's special education procedures, program, and documents.

Social workers from within the district schools go to homes to answer parent's questions and to ensure notices and other important special education documents are explained and signed. In addition, the Indian Education Coordinator assists parents with community services and Special Education procedures and programming for their children. The team concluded these are promising practices.

### **Meets Requirements**

The team did not agree with the committee's conclusions for meeting Procedural Safeguards.

### **Out of Compliance-Needs Assistance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:30:04. Prior notice and parent consent.**

Written notice which meets the requirements of § 24:05:30:05 must be given to the parents five days before the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

#### **ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice.** The notice must include the following:

- (1) A description of the action proposed or refused by the district, an explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take the action, and a description of any other options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
- (2) A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal;
- (3) A description of any other factors which are relevant to the district's proposal or refusal;
- (4) A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards of this article and, if this notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained; and sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this article.

**ARSD 24:05:30:17. Consent.**

"Consent" means that the parents have been fully informed in the native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought in the native language or another mode of communication; the parents understand and agree in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which consent is sought; the consent describes that activity and lists any records which will be released and to whom; and the granting of consent by the parents is voluntary and may be revoked in writing at any time. If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive (i.e., the revocation does not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked).

Through interview and a review of student records, the monitoring team concurred the Prior Notice for Consent document used by the district did not consistently inform parents of all relevant information regarding the areas in which their child would be evaluated. An example is the description for a psychological evaluation that includes the areas of cognition, visual-motor, achievement, attention, and/or emotional status. Because the majority of the prior notice/consents did not indicate which of the area(s) would be assessed, parents were not fully informed of the activities for which they were providing consent.

**ARSD 24:05:27:12. Graduation requirements.**

Completion of an approved secondary special education program with a regular high school diploma signifies that the student no longer requires special education services. Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change in placement requiring written prior notice in accordance with this article.

The instructional program shall be specified on the individual educational program. The individual educational program shall state specifically how the student in need of special education or special education and related services will satisfy the district's graduation requirements. Parents must be informed through the individual educational program process at least one year in advance of the intent to graduate their child upon completion of the individual educational program and to terminate services by graduation.

**ARSD 24:05:30:04. Prior notice and parent consent.**

Written notice which meets the requirements of § 24:05:30:05 must be given to the parents five days before the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. The five-day notice requirement may be waived by the parents. If the notice described in this section relates to an action proposed by the district that also requires parental consent, the district may give notice at the same time it requests parent consent.

Through a review of student files, the review team validated the steering committee's concern. Student graduation requirements are documented in the IEP

one year prior to graduation; however, parents are not consistently provided written prior notice signifying the student no longer requires special education services upon graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma. This constitutes a change in placement requiring written prior notice.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. Assessment data
2. District Data Sources:
  - a. District form document review
  - b. Review of Parent Rights brochure
  - c. File review data
  - d. Parent survey data
  - e. Staff survey data
  - f. Training data

### **Promising Practice**

Assistive technology services within the district were determined by the steering committee to be a promising practice.

The committee also identified a promising practice to be the district's utilization of IEP facilitators.

### **Meets Requirements**

Based on review of district forms, file review data, and parent survey information, the steering committee concluded the district adheres to the requirements for a five-day written notice, notice of invitation, and appropriate action to ensure parents understand IEP procedures.

The steering committee determined through file reviews and staff survey data that transition plans for students are evident and meet requirements. A coordinated set of transition activities are provided and related services are considered. Training was held in the fall of 2006 to address improvement in the accurate documentation in transition IEPs for all 16 year-olds, documenting student input in the transition IEP, and the sending of an invitation to all those providing or paying for transition services

The Fall training included behavior intervention strategies documentation on the Special Factor page.

The steering committee concluded the district meets all the IEP content requirements and ensures an appropriate IEP is developed for each eligible student.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the promising practices of the district's assistive technology services and utilization of IEP facilitators. In the Sioux Falls CIMP notebook given to the team leader, it was noted the district has a large inventory of assistive technology available. In interviews, the team learned the district sends experts to each building to train and obtain technology to assist students and teachers with special needs. During on-site visits, the monitor's observed several students using an extensive array of innovative, up-to-date assistive technology devices.

It was noted each school in the district has its' own unique method of providing services for students and embrace the potential of every child, which the team determined was a promising practice.

In interviews at Lincoln High School it was found special education teachers have a daily collaboration time period to discuss student progress, communicate issues, and to brainstorm solutions. Outside personnel who have expertise in transition are invited to the meetings to assist with student transition activities and programs. The team was in consensus this is a promising practice..

The monitoring team also found the following curriculums to be promising practices:

- **Literacy Zone**

Patrick Henry Middle School has implemented a reading skills program with a reading specialist. Students are placed in a program when they do not meet proficiency in reading. The class includes students with disabilities, as well as those in regular education. When they meet proficiency they are no longer required to attend this class. Parents may request students continue in the class even after meeting proficiency.

- **Summit Oaks:**

This behavior intervention program conducted by the district and Lutheran Social Services provides an opportunity for students to continue their education and receive positive behavior instruction. The students are allowed to continue participation in extra curricular activities and community service; for example, students assist the elderly with snow removal.

- **FAME Program:**

At all the district high schools, eighth and ninth grade students who have been determined to have reading difficulties join a class that focuses on reading skills.

This program allows no more than ten students per class with a highly qualified teacher and an education assistant.

- JROTC Program at Washington High School.

This program involves collaboration between special education and JROTC staff, which encourages students to continue their classes to meet graduation requirements and not drop out of school.

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team agreed with the steering committee that IEP data meets requirements, except in the areas identified below.

### **Out of compliance: Needs Assistance**

The monitoring team did not validate the steering committee's conclusions pertaining to IEP team membership, the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), and annual goals.

### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.01 IEP team.**

Each school district shall ensure that the IEP team for each student with disabilities includes the following members:

- (4) A representative of the school District who:
  - (a) Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities;
  - (b) Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
  - (c) Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school District;

Through file reviews and interviews with staff, the monitoring team determined special education teachers (committee chairs) are often serving as the IEP designee and do not meet the criteria necessary for this designation. When interviewing committee chairs, the monitoring team learned an IEP meeting has to be reconvened when funding concerns arise, because the committee chairs cannot make funding decisions.

### **ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP) Present level of academic achievement and functional performance and annual goals**

A student's IEP must contain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process.

Through file reviews, the team found student PLAAFPs consistently lacked the area(s) to be addressed, strengths and needs, and how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

The monitoring team concluded functional assessments, which were identified as needing improvement, are not being completed in such a way to gain skill-specific information to develop PLAAFPs for students eligible for special education services. Because functional assessment information was lacking, the present level of performance did not reflect the student's specific skill strengths and needs; thus, the student's annual goals also did not reflect specific skill areas for services. The goals were often written from the standards and not skill specific or written in measurable terms, nor were the objectives or benchmarks measurable. Examples of goals that were not measurable are: "Use decoding and word recognition skills to develop vocabulary and increase when reading unfamiliar text"; "Will participate and display good effort in physical activity during physical education class"; "Using verbal and visual assistance, ... will do reading skills with 90% accuracy on 2 of 3 trials"; "Express knowledge, ideas, and requests clearly using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure....".

#### **ARSD 24:05:27:13.02. Transition services.**

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through file reviews and interviews, the team determined the district's course of study does not reflect an educational program and planning that is individualized, meaningful, and directly related to the students' measurable postsecondary goals. The district's IEP form does not incorporate a section to facilitate and document a discussion of courses of study. Through interviews with staff, there appears to be a general reluctance to project future classes. Some evidence of projecting future classes was found in parts of student files, but the course of study is not infused into the IEP. The focus tends to be on credits earned to date rather than courses needed to promote movement toward the student's post-secondary goals.

A second area of concern identified through file reviews and interviews is a lack of services/activities linked to students' measurable postsecondary goals. Information contained in this transition services section of the district's IEP form often reflected present level of performance statements, rather than activities and services that were needed for the current IEP. Activities to be completed in the coming year were not consistently listed. Some activities were listed in the present levels section and some possible service activities also appear on the district's Transition Checklist. Improved completion of the activities section has been noted with files completed in the past six weeks. Many of these newer files showed individualized activities and/or services the student should complete prior to the next IEP annual

review date that will allow him to make progress towards the stated measurable post-secondary goals.

As part of the Part B State Performance Plan, Indicator 13 is evaluated as part of the on-site review. The Performance Indicator 13 Checklist, developed by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, was used to measure "The percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the child to meet the post-secondary goals." [20 U.S.C. 141 (a)(3)(B)]

In the 172 files evaluated using the Indicator 13 Checklist, 63 files met all six of the checklist criteria. Of the files that did not meet all of the criteria, the main areas of concern were courses of study aligned with post-secondary goals (60 files) and services that focus on improving academic and functional achievement to facilitate movement from school to post-school (48 files).

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

1. State LRE data tables
2. District Comprehensive Plan
3. District Documents:
  - a. District procedures
  - b. Parent survey data
  - c. File review data
  - d. Staff survey data
  - e. Curriculum adaptation guides

### **Promising Practice**

The addition of blended preschool classrooms in the 2006-07 school year was identified as a promising practice by the steering committee.

### **Needs improvement**

Based on staff survey data, parent survey information, student surveys, file reviews, and the district Comprehensive Plan, the committee concluded the district needs improvement in two areas. First, the district needs to educate children with disabilities with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate by reducing the number of students placed in resource, self-contained, and day school programs. Second, the district needs to involve general education teachers in the process of determining supports, curriculum modifications and creative instructional



approaches needed to permit children with disabilities to participate in the general education environment.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The team did not validate committee's promising practice regarding blended pre-school classrooms. This is a LRE requirement.

### **Meets Requirements**

The monitoring team did not validate the steering committee's least restrictive environment conclusion. Through file reviews and interviews with administrators and general education teachers, the team concluded the district meets the requirements for least restrictive environment.